

This Article was written by
Mr. Wm. B. Curry and myself

~~Rella Yeager~~

Rella F. Yeager

Rella Yeager -1-

From notes and papers
of Wm. B. Curry

WATOGA STATE PARK

Rella Yeager

MS 219
Box 9

The lookout house on Watoga State Park is a reproduction of the block houses of Indian warfare days and most properly it is called for Ann Bailey, a heroine of pioneer times. It is constructed of round logs, two storeis in height. The first floor is fourteen by fourteen feet, with a broad stairway of hewn timber leading to the second story, the dimensions of which are twenty by twenty feet. The roof is of clapboards, sloped four sides. On each side are openings for loop holes and lookout places.

It was the plan of the architect to give these lookout houses names of heroines of frontier days and makers of West Virginia history. Most appropriately, the name of Ann Bailey has been given to the block house on Watoga State Park. Ann Bailey (Mad Ann) was a considerable of a character back in Indian times. Along about 1777 she came to the Fort at Charleston with word of a contemplated raid by the Indians. It was found that the supply of powder was short. Some say there was no spontaneous volunteering on the part of the men of the fort to go to Fort Union (Lewisburg) for a supply of powder and others say that Mrs. Bailey insisted on going herself, and that alone. My guess is that the latter is the true version. Anyway, the lady mounted her horse Liverpool, (named for Mrs. Bailey's birthplace in England) and took the trail for Lewisburg, 110 miles away. When the powder was packed on the horses, the woman scout refused the protection of a detachment of militia men. In about three days time, Mrs. Bailey and her pack train made Charleston. It has always been my understanding that the Indians knew about the shortage of powder

and when they did attack, they received the surprise of their lives. There was powder to burn!

Lookout Ann Bailey is located on the high point, just southeast of Camp Seebert. It overlooks the Parks seven miles frontage on Greenbrier River, with its five bends, from above Seebert to Denmar. To the west are the ramparts of the Back Alleghenies-- Droop, Briery, Sewell, Cranberry and other peaks and ranges of the Black Forest. Below it lies that garden spot, the Little Levels, spoken of in this paper by a visiting son of Albion, in 1877, as reminding him of an English countryside, but for the grim mountains. To the east the Alleghany Front, and the Beaver lick, while all around are the wooded ridges and deep canyons of the Watoga State Park.

Another interesting and poetic touch was given when it was decided to give Indian names to each of the trails in Watoga State Park. Trails already built and named are:--

The truck trail from Camp Seebert to Camp Watoga is named Momongoseneka from the Delaware, meaning Big Stone Creek.

The truck trail from Denmar to Seebert, following Greenbrier River is to be named Weotawa, from the Miami name for Greenbrier River.

The bridle and foot trail paralleling Rock Run will be Tokeshelloke, from the Delaware, meaning Falling Creek.

The trail from Denmar up Laurel Creek to Camp Watoga is to be Pocatelico, Shawnee for "Plenty of Fat Doe."

The horse and foot trail now in use on the mountain overlooking Seebert is the "Trail of the Cliffs," and the one following Workman Ridge will be Skyway.

Mr. Billie Georges
Mr. Wm. B. Curry and J. J. J. J.

William B. Curry
National Park Service

Hemmed in by wooded, towering mountains, Watoga State Park, situated in Pocahontas County, is rapidly taking form as one of the most complete and magnificent parks in the entire United States. The West Virginia Conservation Commission, and the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior, cooperating, are making every effort to have the approximate 11,000 acres of park territory ready for a public opening in June, 1937.

Watoga State Park is the largest of the four State parks now under construction in various parts of West Virginia. Located in the beautiful Greenbrier Valley, the mountains and valleys in the vicinity are rich in tradition. It lies two miles off U. S. Route 219, three miles east of Hillsboro. This route is known as the old Senaca Trail, and is prominently mentioned in James Fenimore Cooper's "Leather Stocking Tales". The trail stretches from Senaca Lake in New York State to Georgia. Locally, the road is often referred to as the "Kentucky Trace" and was travelled by Daniel Boone and other trail blazers in their many hunting and scouting treks through this section of the country.

In pre-Revolutionary War days, the tract of land comprising Watoga was a part of the far-reaching neutral hunting grounds for northern, southern and western Indian tribes. Many a bloody battle was fought in and around the surrounding mountains by Indians seeking to retain the territory as their own private hunting grounds. White settlers followed, and a new civilization dawned. Some of the first settlements made in what is now the State of West Virginia were made nearby. During the War between the States, both armies conducted numerous foraging expeditions into this section. A few miles from the park was the scene of the Battle of Droop Mountain.

At the present time, twenty-four log cabins of different styles are nearing completion and should be ready for occupancy, along with approximately sixteen others, by next Spring. Each of the cabins, when finished, will be provided with a wide stone fireplace, electricity, hot and cold showers, inside toilet, and all necessary furniture and kitchen utensils. A park commissary will be centrally located for the convenience of vacationists.

A member of the Commission recently expressed his regrets that none of the cabins or park facilities were sufficiently completed to permit the public use of them before Spring of 1937. At that time, however, a price schedule for the renting of the cabins will be announced.

One of the many creeks coursing through the park has been dammed, creating a twelve-acre lake. It has been well stocked with bass and sunfish, and, at the present, is closed to all fishermen.

Thirteen miles of park roads, fourteen miles of combination foot, horse and truck trails, are nearing completion. Many foot and vehicle bridges have been constructed in various places. A lookout tower on one of the high mountains, built according to the plans of the early blockhouse fort, commands an important and spectacular view of the surrounding scenery. This tower has been named in honor of Anne Bailey, famed in early border warfare.

Twelve acres will be equipped for persons interested in all day outings. This section will provide visitors with picnic shelters, stoves, tables, benches and a water supply.

The picturesque Greenbrier River serves as one of the boundary lines of the park. Known as one of the best fishing streams in the southeast, this River will afford sportsmen the opportunity to live in a cabin near its banks and spend hours angling for the wily trout, pike and bass. During the past three years, it has been stocked with thousands of bass, trout and panfish. Its cooling, green waters will also appeal to boaters and bathers.

Five hundred acres of the tract are made up of virgin oak and white pine forests, and approximately one hundred acres are of open meadow land. The remaining acres consist mainly of young forests or woodland. The Conservation Commission has designated 4,000 acres as a game refuge. This area has been stocked with deer, turkeys, quail, grouse and other game.

A keen-eyed visitor, almost any day, will be rewarded with a glimpse of a deer bounding through his native haunts. No hunting is permitted in the park, but an open season is declared at certain times of the year for the Monongahela National Forest, which almost surrounds the park.

The park offers rare opportunities for students in geology and botany. Within its boundaries are long mountain ranges with many interesting rock and mineral formations. Several universities have conducted field trips to make special studies of these attractions.

In early Spring, the mountains are an array of beautiful wild flowers of shades. A botanical study made the past Spring revealed hundreds of varieties of flowers blooming. Some of those found included: Lady's Slipper - in both pink and yellow; Orchids; Spring Beauties; Water Lilies; Wind Flowers; Columbine; Marsh Marigold; Buttercup; Bloodroot; Blue Lupine; Sweetbrier Rose; Wood Sorrel, and Fringed Polygala. As a result of the presence of so many flowers, 500 acres have been set aside as an arboretum for botany students in West Virginia University and other colleges.

Construction work is being carried on by two companies of Civilian Conservation Corps stationed in the park. T. M. Cheek, State Park Authority, supervises the plans that are developing a park system in West Virginia that will rival those in other States. Boyd B. Hill, and Grady H. Arbogast, Camp Superintendents, are in charge of the construction projects under way in Watoga State Park.

All of the parks are being financed mainly through Federal funds. Once they have been completed and turned over to the State authorities, it will be the responsibility of the State to maintain and operate the parks.

*Mr. Belle Geages
Hillsboro W. Va*

*This Article was written by
Mr. Wm. B. Curry and given
to Mrs Belle Geages*

*The article has the approval
of officials of
National Park Service.*

William B. Curry
National Park Service

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Hillsboro W. Va
August 1 1936

Mr James C. Herbert - State Reader
Federal Writers Projects -
Heermann Building
Charleston W. Va.

Dear Mr Herbert,

I am sending the article
about Watoga State Park which I hope
will be just what you want

Mr Wm B. Curry of the National Park Service
prepared and gave me this article and
it has the approval of the Watoga Park
State officials. Both Mr Curry and I
have descriptive articles of pretty places
in the Park I had a delightful trip
to the Park Thursday after I received
your letter. I think this article is what
you want. Mr Curry said he had some
fine pictures that would be nice for this article
if you want them, please let me know and
I will send them. Very truly yours
Mrs Belle Yeager

(Mrs) followed, and a new civilization

Rella F. Yeager

Mrs. Rella F. Yeager

Rella Yeager

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